

Bernard Shaw, in his preface to "Three Plays by Brieux," has some most pertinent reflections. "Nothing that is admittedly and un-**SERIOUS** mistakably horrible matters very much, **HORRORS**, because it frightens people into seeking a remedy; the serious horrors are those which seem entirely respectable and normal to respectable and normal men." In April, a "floating palace" sank, drowning some 1,500 people, many of them wealthy and prominent. The disaster was "admittedly and unmistakably horrible" and the world gasped its horror. In March, there were 1,643 deaths from tuberculosis, in New York State, and there were reported 2,672 cases of "pulmonary or laryngeal tuberculosis." Tuberculosis seems to be still quite "respectable and normal" in spite of the fact that New York has had a good tuberculosis law since 1908. It would be sadly interesting to know how many women were subjected to serious operations due to pelvic gonorrheal infection innocently acquired, during the same period; doubtless the number would be shockingly large. And yet clean, innocent women are daily being married to infected men, often with the knowledge of their parents. It is within the personal knowledge of almost every physician of much experience, that "the wedding cannot be postponed" because of the "social scandal," even though the parents know the man has a venereal infection. But let us not speak openly of such things as sexual matters or venereal diseases; let us not permit such plays as Brieux's; to do so might wound the tender feelings of the "respectable and normal." These are certainly "serious horrors."

A REPLY.

In the June number of the *STATE JOURNAL* appeared an editorial* commenting upon the action of those physicians who had subscribed to a medical picture gallery with the provision that their own likenesses should be included in the exhibit. Substantially, this editorial comment contended that the egotism and vanity of some members of the medical fraternity had been capitalized by the promoters of a purely commercial enterprise, professional men of various shades and degrees of local prominence having agreed to part with \$150.00 or so for the privilege of seeing copper-plate portraits of themselves published with those of physicians and surgeons of national and international repute, a page of inspired and personally edited biography to accompany each picture.

I cannot spare the time to enter into a discussion with the writer of that editorial, but I wish to point out that both his antiquated view-point as well as the labored rhetoric in which he clothes his misconceptions afford ample evidence that he is out of sympathy with the progressive spirit of the times and is in all probability a member of that

venerable group of "elder statesmen" who are fast ceasing to be a factor in the conduct of matters medical in this State. I will take time, however, to protest against the imputation direct or implied in his remarks. In disagreement I insist that the action of those physicians who have subscribed to this project bespeaks an honorable ambition.

The proposition is that in return for our subscription we shall receive two books, each of fifty engravings and memoirs, each book to contain beside our own the pictures of whatever distinguished colleagues we may personally select from the lists submitted to us by the company. It is contended that others beside the "most eminent" men in our profession have been approached. In so large an undertaking mistakes, errors of judgment, are bound to creep in. I am sure, however, that no one will regret them more than the company. The agent gave me his personal assurance that he had been supplied with the names of only the most eminent men in the district allotted to him. And even if the names of some men of lesser eminence do creep in, of what harm is it? We do not have to include them in *our* editions of the work.

Perhaps its greatest beauty is that we can select our associates, so to speak, picking out the great men with whose portraits our own shall appear. Among them will be those of some of our friends and for the rest, if they are not our friends at least we are theirs. Why, you may ask, have at all albums of the photographs of men who wouldn't remember you if they saw you? If that be so, which I most seriously question, *their* memories are at fault, not ours. Why, in Heaven's name, shouldn't our pictures appear with theirs? The editorial in question implies that the only reason for our appearing with them is a financial one. It would be a dereliction of professional dignity to reply to this innuendo, but if it could be true, would it not be worth \$150.00 to see them there anyhow? I think it would.

There is another and practical side to this question. A side which the antique writer of this editorial overlooked. The two volumes de luxe which the company obligates itself to deliver to us are of a size and shape ideally adapted to a waiting-room table. It is easy to imagine the gratification of a patient who, upon picking up such a book, finds therein the photograph of the doctor she is visiting supported on the one hand for example by the portrait of Sir William Osler and on the other by that of Dr. Simon Flexner. For their own sake, as well as for ours, we have to maintain the confidence in us of our patients and what more convincing evidence of her wisdom in selecting her doctor could such a patient have than is afforded by these volumes? Would she not feel that she need "seek no further, for better can't be found?" We think she would.

To put it another way we think that these volumes enable us to meet the needs expressed by the dolorous poet who transformed Burns' lines beginning "A wad some Power the giftie gie

* "Some men are born great, etc." Page 221.